



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

A further glimpse of the wide scope of the council and its detail of practical responsibility can be gained by noting the fact that it has nine standing committees and six special committees. It is alive in many directions. This year special emphasis is being laid on the home mission work for foreign-speaking people. Through its Neglected Fields Survey Committee, its Committee on Immigration, and other lines of urgent action, the Home Missions Council can be depended upon to do everything in the power of a general advisory body to promote co-operation in place of com-

petition. Throughout this democratic land of ours, in the actual issue everything depends on the growth of co-operative sentiment on the widespread field itself.

Taken all in all, is there any more hopeful sign on the horizon of the kingdom of heaven on earth at the present hour than the sign of the cross which is being borne by this new Simon of Cyrene following the Master? The agency may not be a conspicuous figure on the ultimate pages of history, but it bears the emblem of vital, sacrificial, continental victories.

---

## THE NORTH DAKOTA PLAN OF BIBLE STUDY

---

VERNON P. SQUIRES

Professor of English, University of North Dakota

---

The American Sunday school stands charged with failure; and its most enthusiastic admirers cannot say that there is nothing in the charge. It has elaborate machinery; it enlists the earnest endeavors of numbers of sincere, devoted people; but somehow, it does not secure results commensurate with the effort put forth. Nowhere is this failure more conspicuous than in the case of boys and girls of high-school age. Primary methods and kindergarten devices usually catch and hold the interest of the little ones; but as the children approach the adolescent period there is evident a falling-off in interest and, consequently, in attend-

ance. Boys especially come to feel that they are "too big" to go to Sunday school. They drift out into the current of life unattached in any way to the church, and without any adequate knowledge of the Book which has had more influence than any other upon our civilization, but which by a curious anomaly is not taught in the schools.

The causes for this unfortunate state of affairs do not seem difficult to find. There is, of course, the general restlessness and irresponsibility of youth which make it difficult to keep boys of this age in any kind of school. But besides all this there are various specific causes. In the first place, the teaching is gen-

erally weak and sentimental. Bible history and literature are not made as interesting and vital as, for example, Greek history and literature. This lack of reality is probably due to two facts: (1) the teacher's lack of adequate preparation and experience; and (2) the subject is approached in an unreal and superstitious way, altogether different from that in which other subjects are approached. Plato and Pericles lived in a real world, a world—in its natural aspects at least—like that in which the pupils themselves are living. David and Isaiah, however, are pictured as living in an altogether different sort of world, a world more akin to that of Jack the Giant Killer or Cinderella. Many boys are frankly incredulous; most of them feel an incongruity.

Another cause is the total lack of discipline in the Sunday school. Few—at least of the boys—ever think of *studying* their lessons. Teachers coax and cajole, and offer ribbons and badges as marks of honor, but generally to little purpose. The boy somehow feels that he is condescending even to attend the Sunday school, and that studying would indeed be a work of supererogation. Thus in a great majority of cases, the teacher, having no recourse to any other incentive, finds moral suasion fruitless. Nor is it strange. How many youngsters would study geometry or Latin or history if the only inducement were to please the teacher?

Recognizing these difficulties and firmly believing that Bible study is just as serious and dignified as any other study, we in North Dakota have recently adopted a plan from which we hope great things. This is really a

plan of co-operation between the high school and the Sunday school whereby the high school allows academic credit for work in the Bible. The educational leaders of our state believe that in ethical and cultural value the serious study of the Scriptures is one of the most valuable studies that a young person can pursue. We agree with President Nicholas Murray Butler that "the neglect of the English Bible incapacitates the rising generation to read and appreciate the masterpieces of English literature, from Chaucer to Browning, and it strikes out of their consciousness one element, and for centuries the controlling element, in our civilization." At the same time we understand that, owing to our national policy of the separation of church and state, it is practically impossible to offer Bible courses in school.

Our plan is simply this: The state board has authorized a syllabus in Bible study much as it has in other studies. The syllabus outlines a good course in Old and New Testament geography, history, and literature, and it announces that a half-credit (out of the fifteen generally required for graduation) will be allowed to any high-school girl or boy who can pass an examination based on the syllabus. These examinations are given at the time of the regular state examinations and are open to all who wish to attempt them. It is, however, no part of the plan to have the preliminary study done in the school house or during school hours. The responsibility for the teaching is left with the home and the church. The state maps out the ground to be covered

and awards the credit. The parents, pastors, and Sunday-school teachers must do the actual work of instruction.

Although the idea is as yet new (it went into effect in the fall of 1912), a great many classes have been formed and much interest is manifested. These classes are generally connected with the various Sunday schools or young people's societies, and are taught by the pastor, priest, or some layman specially interested, not infrequently by one of the high-school teachers in the church with which he or she happens to be affiliated. The work done in these classes, while, of course, wholly elective, is just as serious as that undertaken in any of the regular school classes. The official recognition of its value and the assurance of academic credit for real mastery of the subject dignify and standardize the course. From all parts of the state come reports of successful classes, at least one of which is in charge of a Catholic priest, and of an altogether new attitude toward Bible study on the part of a great many of our young people.

In conclusion let me say that while what the state outlines and examines on is the geographical, historical, and

literary aspects of the Bible, yet it is urged upon the various local teachers that they combine with this such ethical and religious training as they desire. On this ground the state cannot intrude; for it, however, it does hope to provide abundant opportunity. It is felt that no young person can read the prescribed readings (between two and three hundred chapters) without catching some of the spiritual ideals and glorious religious conceptions of the biblical writers; and surely no wise teacher will let the opportunity pass unimproved. In all this the makers of the syllabus have sought to avoid all sectarianism and partisanship. The Bible is the only textbook prescribed. Any version, Catholic or Protestant, is acceptable. Moreover, any recognized system of chronology or theory of authorship is accepted. The makers of the syllabus stand for no sect or "school." What is desired is that our young people be given an introduction to the Book of Books, that the hands of the Sunday-school teacher be strengthened, and that the study of the Bible be raised to a higher plane by means of a new incentive and a new ideal.

---

## DISCUSSION

---

NAOUM BEG SHUQUAIR ON THE DERB EL HAGG

---

REV. SARTELL PRENTICE, JR., D.D.  
Nyack, New York

---

The *Biblical World* contained, in its April number, an article on "The Route of Israel in the Desert." In that article I discussed the two roads over one of which Israel made

their journey; the traditional road to the traditional Mt. Sinai, and the Derb el Hagg, the "Pilgrim Road," over which some modern scholars believe Israel traveled to a